

S E R M O N

Preached at

694.9.16.
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St. James's Church in Bath,

ON

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6. 1756:

BEING

The Day appointed by Proclamation for a
GENERAL FAST and HUMILIATION:

And again, by particular Desire, on the *Sunday* following,
at the *Abbey-Church*.

AND

Published at the Request of the Mayor, Aldermen, and
Common Council of the Corporation of that City.

By the Revd. *EDWARD BAYLY*, M. A. *K*
Rector of *Kilkeel*; Treasurer of the Chapter of *Down*, in *Ireland*;
and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of *Devonshire*, Lord
Lieutenant of that Kingdom, &c. &c. &c.

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SEERMON

Preached at
St. James's Church in Dublin

ON
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6. 1750.

THE DAY appointed by Proclamation for a
GENERAL FAST and HUMILIATION:

And again, by particular Notice, on the Sunday following,
at the Abbey Church, Dublin.

AND
PUBLISHED at the Request of the Mayor, Aldermen, and
Common Council of the City of Dublin.

By the Revd. JAMES M. A. ...
Rector of the Church of St. James in Dublin,
and Minister to the Protestant Dissenting Brethren in that
City.

Printed by J. ...
in Dublin.

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To the WORSHIPFUL
THE
MAYOR,
THE
ALDERMEN,
AND
COMMON-COUNCIL,
OF THE
Corporation of the City of BATH,
This DISCOURSE,

(Printed in Compliance with their Request)

I.S.

With all due Respect and Regard,

Addressed, by

Their most obedient Servant,

EDWARD BAYLY.

To the Worshipful

THE

MAYOR,

THE

ALDERMEN,

AND

COMMON-COUNCIL,

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Their most obedient Servant,

EDWARD BAYLY.

S E R M O N

Preached at BATH

On the FAST-DAY, FEBRUARY 6. 1756.

The 4th Chapter of the Prophet *Daniel*, and
Part of the 35th Verse.

*And he doeth according to his Will in the Army of
Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the
Earth: And none can stay his Hand, or say
unto him, What doest thou?*

TH E preceding Part of this Chapter contains the Relation of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Dream, which the wise Men of *Babylon*, the Magicians, the Astrologers, the *Chaldeans* and Soothsayers, could not expound; but which the Prophet interpreted by the unerring Inspiration of God, and from thence forewarned the King, that God (to punish his Pride, and to manifest his own uncontrollable Power) had determined to take his Kingdom away from him
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for a Season, and to reduce him to the most abject State of Contempt and Wretchedness. " That " he should be driven from the Conversation of " Men ; that his Dwelling should be with the " Beasts of the Field ; that he should eat Grass " as the Ox, and for seven Days," that is, (in the prophetical Style) seven Years, " he should " be wet with the Dew of Heaven." This Prediction, we find, was accomplished ; for, " At " the end of twelve Months, as he walked in " the Palace of the Kingdom of *Babylon*," (probably in those celebrated hanging Gardens, from whence he had a perfect View of that pompous City) while elated with Pride, he said, *Is not this Great Babylon that I have built for the House of the Kingdom, by the Might of my Power, and for the Honour of my Majesty ?* At that Instant there fell a Voice from Heaven, saying, *O King Nebuchadnezzar ! to thee it is spoken ; Thy Kingdom is departed from thee — And the same Hour the thing was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar :* And, at the appointed Time, the Purpose of his Punishment was likewise answered ; for, *At the End of the Days I lifted up (says he) mine Eyes to Heaven, and mine Understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and*

his Kingdom is from Generation to Generation ; and all the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing : And he (says he) doeth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth : And none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, What dost thou ?

This was the Occasion of these Words. The Sense of them is plain and obvious.

It is a free and explicit Acknowledgement of an Universal and Almighty Providence which ordereth all Things both in Heaven and Earth.

In discoursing upon this Subject, I shall,

First, Briefly observe the deep and immoveable Foundation on which this important Doctrine is built (laid by Reason, and established by Revelation); as also, some of the most striking outward Proofs of the Exertion of this Providence in worldly Affairs.

Secondly, Point out some Errors which Men are apt to run into in their Notions concerning it. And,

Lastly, Make an Application of what shall be said to the very particular Circumstances of the present Time.

In the *first* place, then, the Belief of a Providence may very truly be said to be deeply founded, and firmly established ; since it is built on, and is the necessary unavoidable Consequence

quence of, those Attributes or Qualities, which are inseparably connected with the first Notions which we form to ourselves of a Supreme Being. The chief of these are, Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Goodness, and Infinite Power.

That *Wisdom is His* (as the Prophet *Daniel* expresses it); that is, not only comparatively, but absolutely, in the strictest and most unlimited Sense; is the evident Consequence of his being God; for Wisdom bears the same Analogy to the Mind, that the Eye does to the Body: As that natural Organ directs the latter, discerning what may be proper to pursue, or what to avoid; what may impede its Motion, and how any Impediment may be removed; so Wisdom is of correspondent Use in the Progression of the Mind; by shewing what will best advance, or what is likely to obstruct, its Designs. This Quality must therefore evidently be not only pre-eminent, but also all-perfect, in the Deity: For, as he is the Center of every possible Excellence, the sole original Cause of all Things, he necessarily must intimately know all their latent Powers and Properties; what every particular Thing can, or cannot produce; what Relation one bears to another; what Things are connected, or divided; what is fit, or what unsuitable, to every possible End or Purpose; for his Ignorance could

(could it be supposed even of the minutest Particular) might disorder, nay, possibly, unhinge the whole Frame and Constitution of the Universe.

Again; *Infinite Goodness* is, and must be, as essential to the Divine Nature as infinite Wisdom; for, what else could induce a Being, in himself completely happy, to create us, or, when created, to preserve us? Whence, else, is it, that we *live, and move, and have our Being*? Whence is it, that we, who are so *fearfully and wonderfully* made, with so many various Inlets for Death, should survive even a single Day, not to say, a Length of Days? Whence, else, is it, that not only Man, but even the meanest Creature, is endued with Senses and Appetites suited to its Nature, and finds Objects proper for its Use and Gratification? It is not only the Heavens therefore *which declare the Glory of God*, or the Firmament *which sheweth his Handy-work*; it is not these only, I say, which demonstrate the Goodness of God, but even the most insignificant Animals, or minutest Works of his Creation; the smallest Insect, as well as the most glorious Angel; nay, not only the Animal, but the Vegetable inanimated World; and of these, not only the tall Cedar of *Libanus*, but the lowest Shrub, or even a Blade of Grass. Accordingly we find the Holy Psalmist calls even upon these to praise their

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God;

God ; not that they themselves are capable of so doing, but because they afford us such ample Matter for our Praises and Thanksgiving.

The last Attribute I mentioned, as inseparable from the Idea of a God, is *Infinite Power* ; without which we could not conceive him to be a happy Being ; since his Wisdom might form such Plans, and his Goodness incline him to will such Things, as he might not be able to perform : And, with regard to us, every Divine Attribute would lose its Influence ; his Justice would be no Object of Fear, or his Mercy of Love ; we could not depend upon his Truth, or confide in his Protection.

But this is a Point, the Belief of which I need not use much Pains to enforce upon Christian Hearers : Even the wiser Pagans affirmed, that there was nothing which the Divine Power could not effect ; that all things (not in themselves contradictory) were to him equally possible : And the inspired Writers, in their peculiar Superiority of Phrase and Sentiment, assert, that he is not only wise in Heart, but mighty in Strength. *The Lord, the everlasting God, the Creator of the Earth* (says *Isaiah*) *fainteth not, nor is weary. He removeth* (says *Job*) *the Mountains, and they know it not : He shaketh the Earth, and the Pillars thereof tremble : And* (says *David*) *in the Lord,*

is everlasting Strength. Now, since these Properties are thus inseparably joined, and absolutely included in our Notion of a Deity, and since this Being, thus Infinitely *Wise*, thought fit to create us ; this Being, Infinitely *Good*, daily provides for, and preserves us ; and this Being, Infinitely *Powerful*, has, and does employ his Power to execute these gracious Purposes ; the Belief of a Providence is the necessary Result ; since that Term implies no more than this Exertion of those Attributes, of which we must conceive him to be possessed, and of which we are surrounded by incontestable Proofs.

This leads me to consider likewise some of the most convincing outward Evidences of this important Doctrine : And these, when attended to, must ~~have~~ Conviction through the Soul of every reasonable Man, which Way soever he turns his Thoughts ; whether to the *natural*, or to the *moral* World.

If to the *former*, he finds it written in every Page of that great Volume of Nature which lies open before him ; he every-where sees Order, Symmetry, and Design, speaking a glorious, beneficent, over-ruling God ; he sees all things formed in Number, Weight, and Measure ; all wonderfully adapted to the particular Purposes of their Creation, and governed by constant,

wise, invariable Laws : The Borders of the Earth set ; Summer and Winter regularly succeeding each other ; so that Seed-time and Harvest never cease. We see vast planetary Bodies *running their appointed Course* with an amazing yet exactly proportioned Degree of Velocity, and the Paths of their Orbits traced out by the Divine Compass of the first Mover ; we see the Springs of Nature in his Hands, which he turns as he pleases ; by which means he can, at his Will, (even without altering his first general Laws) reward or punish his Creatures, either by giving them fruitful Seasons, and so *filling all Things living with Plenteousness* ; or else by making *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, Earthquakes, or stormy Winds, fulfil his Word.*

If we look into the *moral World*, we see the Footsteps of a God equally discernable ; we see him producing Events by us unaccountable, and by Ways as unsearchable ; we see the several Geniuses, Capacities, and Dispositions of Men, made subservient to the Designs of his Providence ; nay, their very Passions, even the *Wrath of Man* (in this Sense) *working the Righteousness of God* : For, though he obliges no Man to do Good or Evil by any irresistible Impulse, yet he may, and undoubtedly often does, cause particular Persons to do that
Good

Good which they intend not, or restrain them from that Evil which they meditate; and thus makes them (by acting counter to their own Intentions) become unknowing Instruments either of the Blessings or the Judgments of Heaven.

This is frequently observable in the Occurrences of private Life, but more remarkably in the great Changes and Revolutions in States and Governments. In Holy Writ we see the Rise and Fall of Empires many Ages foretold, and sometimes the principal Agent (humanly speaking) by whom they were to be accomplished, mentioned, even by Name: And indeed, in the Annals of every Country, we read of so many surprising and important Alterations in political Systems, caused without any seemingly adequate human Means, but afterwards appearing plainly to have been preparatory to some great providential Dispensation, that he must renounce common Sense, as well as Religion, who does not perceive and acknowledge the visible Hand of God.

But lest in those Events, which in Appearance are brought about by the common Course of Things, the Influence of a Supreme Ruler should be over-looked or controverted by short-sighted or ill-judging Men; lest this, I say, should happen, God hath not, in any Age of the World, left himself without a Witness of a more extraordinary,

ordinary, and therefore more convincing Kind; such as Miracles, Prodigies, and the like direct Evidences of the immediate Interposition of a Divine, Supernatural Power, of which we find so many Instances in the Scriptures: And if there was the least Occasion to confirm the Belief of these, by the concurrent Testimony of profane Historians, it would be an easy Matter to shew, that, though in those there are many Falshoods imposed upon a credulous World, yet, at the same time, many Facts of this Nature are so well attested, that we must give our Assent to the Truth of them, unless we run into downright Scepticism, and, like *St. Thomas*, will believe nothing which we do not see and feel.

Now these extraordinary Manifestations of the Finger of God are commonly the more convincing, because they are more sudden and surprising; for, otherwise, the constant, regular Course of Nature is as great, nay, possibly, a greater Proof of a Providence, than any occasional Interruption of it can be. Thus, the Sun's Rising and Setting at exact particular Periods, and the consequent Vicissitude of Day and Night, from the Creation to this Hour, is, at least, as incontestable a Proof of the Superintendence of a Deity, as the stopping of that Luminary, or of the Earth, (which answers the same Purpose) at

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the Command of *Joshua*; and the constant Flux and Reflux of the Sea, as clearly demonstrates his ruling the Waves thereof, as their standing as a Wall, on the Right-hand and on the Left, for the *Israelites* to pass.

But then, the former are Wonders which constantly appear, and therefore are no longer wondered at; we see them every Day, and therefore seeing, we do not see; that is, we do not perceive the obvious Consequence; whereas the latter, by being uncommon, alarm and terrify: In them the Lords seems to bare his Arm in the Sight of all Nations, that they may see and fear, and do no more wickedly.

I shall now (as I proposed in the second place) observe some Errors which Men are apt to fall into, in regard to this most important Subject.

I shall mention but Two, and these arising from opposite Causes.

The one from an over-great Opinion of the Depth of human Penetration, and too implicit a Dependance on the imagined Infallibility of Maxims, by themselves often arbitrarily established.

The other, on the contrary, from such a scrupulous and rigid Sense of these Matters, as leads to Superstition, and other bad Consequences.

Now, in relation to the first, it must (I apprehend)

prehend) appear to every Man of common Observation, that in this philosophical Age, Numbers of Men who indulge themselves in a great Latitude, or (as they chuse to call it) Freedom in Thinking, are thence led to lean too securely on the Principles of Science, often falsely so called, and by that means, are tempted to imagine, that they can, without having recourse to a supernatural Power, sufficiently account for all Events, whether ordinary or extraordinary, which happen here below; by which Position their Belief of a Providence is greatly weakened and confined, if not totally suspended.

Such *Disputers of this World* (as St. Paul terms them) are willing to forget, that natural Causes are but Second Causes; and therefore, properly called Second Causes, because they are subordinate to a First; which gives them all their Power and Influence, and is indeed the only true Reason, why they are, or can be, productive of those Effects which seem to proceed immediately from them.

Thus they will tell us, that the Sun exhales Vapours from the Earth; that these Vapours form Clouds in the Air; that these Clouds dissolve, and fall again in Rain; that these Rains water the Earth, and are the principal known Cause of Vegetation. They will likewise assign the Causes
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of Winds and Storms, as also of Meteors, Vulcanos, Earthquakes, and the like; and this, they seem to think, is accounting sufficiently for these Appearances, and their Effects. But then, why the Sun should have this Power of Exhalation; or why refreshing Showers should clothe the Fields with Flowers and Verdure; or how the fluid Drops of Water should be condensed into a Part of the ~~tough and~~ solid Oak, or become substantial Nutriment for Man or Beast; or when, or where, God will *raise a destroying Wind*, as in the Prophet *Jeremiah*, we read, he threatened to do against *Babylon*; of all these things, I say, they must confess themselves as ignorant as the most illiterate Peasant.

And thus, by the same Rule, had a Person of this way of Thinking lived at the Time when *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* were destroyed by Fire from Heaven, he would certainly have undertaken to account for it on Philosophical Principles: He had doubtless discovered, that the Earth around those Cities was strongly impregnated with sulphureous and other inflammable Materials; that Particles from these evaporated, and, being lighted by some natural Means in the Regions above, caused those Showers of Fire and Brimstone, recorded in Scripture: But then, why these Causes lay dormant and unactive from the Creation to

that Day ; or why they should then destroy only those particular Cities ; or why those particular Cities, at that particular Time, when the Measure of their Iniquities was full, when they were become the Sinks of Vice and Impurity ; *when the Cry was so great, and their Sin so grievous* ; and, lastly, how *Lot* should so exactly know the very Time when this Destruction was to happen, and by that means save himself and his Family ; of any of these Difficulties, I say, he could not have devised even a probable Solution ; and therefore must have remained as much at a loss as ever. For it seems to me to be a Consideration of very little Consequence, whether God immediately sends forth his destroying Angel, as into the Camp of the *Affyrians* ; or whether He makes use of Materials predisposed to be the Instruments of his Vengeance, and the Executors of his Wrath.

Yet, with this shallow superficial Knowledge do we too often see these vain Reasoners satisfied ; and because, perhaps, they see a Link or two of that great Chain from Heaven to Earth, by which some of the Antients allegorically represented the Dependance of all earthly Things on the Divine Will ; they never look farther, nor consider where the End of it reaches, or to what it is connected.

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In short, the Tendency of these Men's Arguments seems to be to exclude a God, as much as possible, from the Superintendence of worldly Affairs; and therefore, if they can (however imperfectly) account for any Phenomena by natural Powers, it is with them a sufficient Reason to deny a supernatural one; though they cannot but know, that the Laws of Nature are but the Order of the God of Nature; and the Effects of them, the Results of his Appointment.

I shall conclude this Head of my Discourse with this Observation; that if Opinions, such as I have been speaking of, were generally received, they must in the End abolish all Supplications and Addresses to God, either for temporal Blessings, or against temporal Calamities: Even our Lord's Prayer would be deemed useless and nugatory; for if his Will is not as particularly *done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*, why should we pray *each Day for our daily Bread? Why, not to be led into Temptation, or to be delivered from Evil?*

But, *Secondly*, the other Error I mentioned, in regard to this Attribute, arises, as I said, from too scrupulous and rigid a Sense of God's Providence; leading to Superstition, and other bad Consequences; since it tempts us, not only to denominate every trivial Misfortune, a direct Judgment, or Punishment from God, and even to

assign a Reason for it; but also to form our Opinions of the Characters of Men from the Good or Evil which happens to them in this Life; than which, nothing can (in general) be more false and inconclusive: For how often do we see the best Men in this World most miserable? and, on the contrary, *the wicked become old, and mighty in Power?*

Job, Socrates, and, above all, the Apostles and Martyrs, are convincing Proofs of the one; and the many Monsters of Cruelty and Vice, who have been raised to despotic Power, are as undeniable Examples of the other.

Though, therefore, we are to acknowledge the Hand of God in every Dispensation, yet it does not follow from thence, that we are authorized to determine the Reasons of his Actings; since his Judgments are a Deep which we cannot fathom, and his Ways past our finding out. Nor are we presumptuously to pronounce the Merit or Demerit of those, who are the Objects, either of his apparent Blessings, or Corrections; since he often punishes, when we think he rewards; and the Righteous is often *taken away from the Evil to come.*

This Matter is very clearly explained in the Gospel appointed for the late Fast Day, though I fear it is by some not properly understood:

Suppose

Suppose ye, says our SAVIOUR, that those Eighteen on whom the Tower of Siloam fell, were Sinners above all Men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Now from this Passage, it has, I doubt, been inferred, that our Lord represents the Death of these Men as casual and accidental; in which God did not by any means interfere; whereas the evident Sense of it is the very reverse; for, by his declaring to the Jews, that if they did not repent, they should all likewise perish, he plainly affirms, that the Death of these Men was from God; and by his saying, that those Men were not Sinners above the rest, he as explicitly asserts, that they were, notwithstanding, Sinners; and were therefore punished, though many, equally so, were spared, for Reasons known only to God.

The true Interpretation of this Text therefore is, to caution us not to judge rashly of others, or comparatively of ourselves with those who are in any extraordinary Manner visited by the Hand of God; but only to take Warning from what happens to as good, or perhaps better Persons, to amend our Lives, lest we also be consumed.

I am now to apply the Doctrine I have been explaining to our present very peculiar Circumstances;

stances; I mean, in regard to those astonishing Calamities, which some Nations have lately so severely felt, and which must very deeply affect the Mind of every Person, who is not utterly callous and dead to the Feelings of Compassion for the Miseries of his Fellow-creatures; or so stupidly insensible, as not to see that we are every Day; nay, every Hour, liable to a like dreadful Visitation; especially, when (I fear) we must in our Hearts acknowledge, that there is too much Reason to dread, that God *for our Sins may be worthily displeased at us.*

But is such an Application necessary? Can it be necessary to warn the Criminal, who sees the Sword of Justice drawn, and brandished over his Head, to use all Means to avoid its Edge?

Is it possible that we, who believe the Law and the Prophets, who have seen them fulfilled by Christ and his Apostles; who must consequently know, that *doubtless there is a God that judgeth the Earth*; is it possible, I say, that We (vile, sinful Dust and Ashes!) should not tremble at the Consciousness of his Presence? especially at this Time, when his *Judgments are abroad in the Earth*, and his *Terrors set in dreadful Array before us*; when not only *Nations is rising against Nation*; when we *bear (not only) of Wars, and Rumors of War*; but when the very
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Elements are at war; when every Quarter of this solid Globe is torn and shaken by intestine strange Convulsions; when *the whole Creation travaileth in Pain*; when all things indeed conspire to make us apprehend, that *there is Wrath gone out from the Lord!*

Yes, my Brethren! notwithstanding these Things, though Heaven, and Earth, and Nature, loudly call us to immediate Reflection and Amendment; yet are there, I fear, too many among us, whom all these Tokens cannot rouse; whom all these Signs of an angry God cannot awaken to *think on the Things which belong unto their Peace*; but they fold their Arms as the Sluggard, and hug themselves in a false Security: They say, *To-morrow shall be as this Day*; and flatter themselves, as St. Peter did his Master, when he foretold his own Sufferings, saying, *Far be it from thee, Lord; this shall not happen unto thee.*

For good and wise Reasons therefore, was a Day lately appointed by public Authority, to be solemnly observed throughout this Kingdom, with Prayer, with Fasting, and Mourning; that the united Addresses and Humiliation of a whole People may intercede for Mercy and (before it is too late), deprecate the Wrath of an offended God, and avert his threatened Judgments. Yet,

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as outward Acts of this kind are the Means, but hearty Repentance, true Faith, sincere Reformation, and Perseverance in Well-doing, the Ends proposed, it is still my Duty, from this Place, to contribute (the little in my Power) to these excellent Purposes.

Come then, and let me reason with you; let me ask you, in the Name of God, in the Name of that God, before whose Judgment-Seat, we know not how soon, we must all stand! In his sacred Name, I say, let me ask you, What He *could do for this his Vineyard, which he hath not done?* What Mercies could he vouchsafe, which have not been shewed us? What Warnings could be given, which we have not received? Have not the Favours of his Providence been wonderful; I may say, peculiar to us? *For what Nation is so Great, who hath had God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God hath been, in all things that we have called upon him for?* Have we not heard with our Ears, and have not our Fathers declared unto us the noble Works which he did in their Days, and in the old Time before them?

Does not this Island, though so remote from the Scene of our Saviour's Life and Sufferings, lay claim, at least, to the Honour of the first Christian King? But, certainly, was very early blessed with the glad Tidings of the Gospel:

When,

When, in succeeding Ages, the Clouds of Ignorance and Superstition obscured this glorious Light, and Papal Tyranny oppressed us, were we not (through the Grace of God) among the first who broke the Yoke, and cast away its *Cords from us?*

When, shortly after, the (falsely called) *Invincible Armada* was sent to crush our Reformation in its Birth, and overturn our civil, as well as religious Rights, did not God visibly fight for us? Did not He (as our great *Elizabeth* most piously expressed it on her Medals, *Did not He*), *blow with his Wind, and they were scattered?* Again, when civil Discord and enthusiastic Fury stabbed the very Vitals of our Constitution, both in Church and State, and triumphed over their Ruins, did not his over-ruling Will *turn the Hearts of Men like Rivers of Water*, and restore our antient Form of Government in all its former Splendor? And, lastly, when an unhappy infatuated Prince endeavoured to bolt on once more our slavish Shackles, did not his Providence again send us a Deliverance, without Blood, without Disorder or Confusion, and procure us that happy Settlement under which we long have, and, I trust, we long shall (notwithstanding all the Attempts of our Enemies) enjoy, the invaluable Blessings of pure and undefiled Religion, just

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and wholesome Laws, Plenty, Property, and Liberty?

And now, when all these repeated Acts of Goodness have not had a proper Effect, but *we have gone on still in our Wickedness, and sinned even while the Manna was yet in our Mouths*; have not of late the Threatenings of his Judgments been as remarkable as his past Mercies? Was not, some Years ago, our proud Metropolis shaken by Earthquakes, for many Centuries unknown in this Climate? and yet without the least Loss or Damage in any particular: As if designed only to shew us what God might do, if we continued to provoke him.

Has not this Nation been visited likewise with a Plague among the Cattle; so that *the Ox was not strong to labour*, nor was his Flesh deemed wholesome for the Food of Man?

And, above all, at this Instant, do we not daily hear of Earthquakes in divers Places; of fearful Agitations both of Earth and Water; of Mountains falling into the Midst of the Sea; *the Waves thereof roaring*, scorning their former Bounds, and spreading Desolation over ruined Countries?

Has not (almost before our Eyes) the flourishing Capital of a Kingdom in strict Friendship and Alliance with us, been so totally destroyed,
that,

that, like *Jerusalem*, scarcely one Stone is left upon another; while others have been swallowed up, and whole Armies buried in the Bowels of the Earth? Are we not, at the same time, threatened by the Arm of Man, as well as that of God? And though I doubt not but, by the Wisdom of our King and Legislature, we are as well prepared, in this respect, as human Strength and Policy will admit; yet we must remember, that *the Battle is not always to the Strong*; and that therefore, if *God goes not forth with our Fleets and Armies, it is not our Bows, or other Implements of War, in which we can trust; nor is it our Swords alone which can help us.*

Upon the whole then, what Warning (I must again repeat it, what Warning), either from Heaven or Earth, from God or Man, hath not been given us? And shall nothing move us? Shall they all be vain and ineffectual? Shall we be deaf to every Call, whether of Love, or Fear; of Gratitude, or even Self-preservation? Shall we provoke the Lord of Hosts, till the Enemy is even at our Gates? Will we not shake off our Lethargy, till the very House we sleep in totters over our Heads? Will not the wicked Man turn from his Wickedness, and strive to save his Soul alive, till the very Spot of Earth on which he stands cleaves asunder, and he goes down quick

into the Pit, like *Korah* and his impious Company? Should he not rather instantly fly far from the Precipice of Vice, and cry (with affrighted *Israel*) ;—*Lest the Earth swallow me also?*

Alas ! if such complicated Mercies and Threatnings should have no Influence upon us, how justly might our Saviour say to us, as he once did to *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, Woe to thee, *Britain* ! Woe to thee, incorrigible Land ! *For if the Works which have been done in thee, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had long since repented in Sackcloth and Ashes.*

But, Thanks be to Heaven ! we are yet on this Side the Grave ; we are yet in the Hands of that God, who in *Wrath* remembereth *Mercy*.

Oh ! then, let us lay fast hold of this blessed Hope, and work while it is called To-day, lest the Night come, in which no Man can work. This Work, we all must know, consists in Penitence and Prayer ; what every Man is to repent of, he is to search for in the Bottom of his Heart ; we have all a faithful Monitor within, who will not fail to tell us in what, how oft, and how grievously we have offended : And, God grant ! that a most scandalous Neglect of his Worship and Ordinances, a strange Spirit of Profaneness and avowed Contempt of that precious Blood which

which was shed for us, be not found in the black Catalogue.

But though our *Sins should be as red as Scarlet*, yet with the Lord there is Mercy; he is more ready to hear, than we to pray; and has declared, that he desireth not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should turn from his Wickedness, and live.

Let us then do our Part, and, at this solemn Time, humble ourselves under his mighty Hand: Let each of us, of every Rank and Station, High and Low, Rich and Poor, prostrate ourselves before the *Throne of Grace*, and pray with contrite Hearts for Peace and Pardon: Let the Great and Opulent learn how transitory is worldly Pomp and Grandeur; how vain it is to trust in the Multitude of Riches, from the recent Instance of (perhaps) the richest Prince in *Europe*, by one Day's Calamity, reduced (as he is said emphatically to have expressed himself) 'to be a King without an House, without Subjects, without Servants, without Money, and without Bread.'

Let such, therefore, learn to break off their Sins by Righteousness, and their Iniquities, by shewing Mercy to the Poor; *Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar; and let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord! and give not thine Heritage to Reproach; and let them*
zealously

zealously endeavour, both by Exhortation and Example, by Preaching and Living, to set forth God's true and lively Word, so as to *save both themselves and those that hear them.*

Let the Poor learn, in whatsoever State they are, therewith to be content; and, since they see so evidently, that *Riches have Wings, and fly away*, let this teach them, to lay up *Treasures for themselves in Heaven, where neither Rust nor Moth doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through and steal*; nay, which the Rage of Elements, and Wreck of Worlds, could not destroy.

Lastly, Let every Individual *smite his Breast, and say* (with the humble Publican), *God be merciful to me, a Sinner!*

I have now trespassed, perhaps, too long upon your Time; but the Subject, I hope, will plead my Excuse. In our present alarming Circumstances, some Minutes extraordinary may surely be allowed to the Consideration of our God, our Duty, our Means of present Happiness, and our Salvation in the World to come. Many are the Hours, the Days, nay, the Years, which we devote to Pleasures, to Riot, to Vanity, to Vice. And what is the Fruit of those Things, but future Shame and Sorrow? whereas, if we now employ ourselves properly; that is, if we now sincerely acknowledge our Transgressions, and henceforth resolve

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resolve to sin no more; what may we not hope from the Favour of a reconciled God? Even for Ten righteous Persons, He promised *Abraham* to spare a populous City: I trust, there are in this Nation, many Thousands such: Who knows, but Thousands more may be added, by proper Resolutions formed on this Occasion?

And indeed, the exemplary and truly religious Observance of the late solemn Fast, in this City; not only by the absolute Cessation of all trivial Amusements, as well as worldly Occupations, but also, by the very extraordinary Appearance of People, of all Ranks and Degrees, at the Houses of God, where, from the Decency of their Behaviour, their earnest Attention, and apparent Devotion, we may, I trust, truly judge, that God was *worshipped in the Beauty of Holiness*: This, I say, must give every sincere Christian a pleasing Hope, that there is still a Spark of Piety left in this Nation, which (by the Grace of God) may yet kindle into a Flame, rise up as Incense before Him, and produce in us the Fruit of good Works.

If this be the happy Consequence (Which may the Father of all Mercies grant!) we may confidently hope, nay, we may rest assured, that *God will be intreated for the Land*. Then, need we not fear, *though the Earth be moved,*
and

*and the Hills be carried into the midst of the Sea;
 though the Waters thereof rage and swell; and
 though the Mountains shake with the Tempest of
 the same: The Lord of Hosts, He will be with us:
 The God of Jacob will be our Refuge.*

Now, To the All-wise, All-good, All-powerful
 God, our Creator, Ruler, and Preserver; To
 Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; be all Glory,
 Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now,
 and for evermore! *Amen.*

F I N I S